

DD at a Crossroads

Should *Dunham Dispatch* continue publication? This question is asked of our readers who belong to the NDFA, & it is also asked of readers who are not NDFA members/

It has been our intention to keep on publishing DD until such time as the NDFA (which has kindly provided DD's editor with an honorary membership) was able to establish a regular publishing schedule, including materials submitted by its members. That may be about to happen, but we wanted to "be there for you" until that became a certainty. Our feeling has always been that having TWO Dunham family newsletters would be nothing short of overkill; we planned to bow out when it became apparent that there WERE 2 such newsletters in regular production.

Is now the time?

Incoming materials have fallen off drastically, which leads us to think that it may be.

We need input from our readers on this question. Do you want DD to remain in operation? If so, send in more of the great materials that DD has enjoyed & shared with the extended family for so many years--especially since 1991, when we really "got going."

Your "ancestor stories," old (or new) photographs, & all the various materials that have made DD such a joy to produce are needed now. (We could even add a few new "subscribers" to our mailing list, if you know of other Dunhams or Dunham descendants who would like to receive it & who would be willing & able to "pay" for those "subscriptions" with materials of their own.)

Should DD continue?

Do give this question some thought, & please don't keep your conclusions to yourself.

Letters Home to the Children

Away from his family in Maryland because of failing health, Francis S. Dunham (1812-1856) (8)(John 1, John 2, John 3, Ebenezer 4, Ebenezer 5, Jonathan 6, Ralph 7) kept in regular touch with his wife, & he didn't overlook writing special letters to his children so that they wouldn't feel neglected. Francis was staying with relatives in his native Connecticut at this period, & he wrote his son Frank (aged 11) about his northern cousins. We'll interrupt Francis' letter to identify them as he mentions them.

"Rockville, Conn., Wednesday morn ((Aug. 22, 1855)) My dear Frank: I have a little time left before the next mail closes, & I have been anxious every day to write something to you because I cannot see you & talk to you. I need not say I hope you are very attentive & useful to your mother because I am persuaded that you will do your best in the absence of your father. But O, my son, thank God, your heavenly father. Pray to Him to make you his true disciple in heart & hope as in name & profession.

"You cousins are very busy in making kites. They seem nearly as tall as I am. They get the materials very conveniently. They went to a shop to ask a man for kite sticks, & he immediately sawed with his machine some very long & fine sticks. Melinda ((might be daughter of Francis' sister Henrietta & Zenas Loomis; a girl called Nersa Lillie in the Dunham records was born in 1845. Can find no one else she might be, & NERSA is probably a misreading of of the girl's name)) is here going to school. She is very anxious to hear about you. She wants to know what you study. her teacher in Geography I do not think very critically correct. She told Melinda that Guiana in South America was pronounced GUINEA & did not seem to know that there was any difference between Guiana & Guinea.

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LETTER TO CHILDREN (from Page 1) Your cousins Edwin, Sylvester ((Edwin (b. 1845) & Sylvester (b. 1846) were sons of his brother Jonathan L. Dunham (1814-1886))) & Fanny ((Fanny (1845-1915) was the daughter of his sister Olive Dunham Barrows)) & myself had a game of ball the other day. They play well, & we had a fine time of it. Their schoolhouse is a very fine brick building, nearly, if not quite as large as our church, & finer than any building in Berlin. Their seats & desks are all of fine polished wood, & everything in the room is very fine & very neat.

"Good bye, my dear boy. I hope I shall see you in a few weeks."

TO SON SAMMY, aged 5: "My dear Sammy: I write a few words to tell you how much I want to see your dear round little face & hear you spell & read. You must send me some work in Mother's next letter."

TO SON RALPH, aged 3: "My dear curly-headed Ralph: Father wants to see & kiss you very much. He hopes to do it in a few weeks. Kiss dear little Cornelia ((aged 8 months)) & tell her Father will soon be home."

NOTE: Francis was still writing from Connecticut in October of 1855, so it is doubtful if his plans to return to Berlin, MD took shape. He died in March, 1856; it is probable that he did get home before then, but it is not certain.

Dunham/Donham Speculations: A Serious Estrangement

Most of us are DUNHAMS, but some of us are DONHAMS, & it is intriguing to speculate how this spelling difference occurred. Are we totally different families? Perhaps, but somehow that seems unlikely. But if not, why the change? Would it be due to the vagaries in pronunciation? To some census-takers interpretation? Or could there be some more dramatic reason for it?

Thomas J. Donham (b. 1855), author of the 1913 *Genealogy of the Donhams in America*, thought there was. In his book he relates that 2 Donham brothers traveled from Ireland to England & from England to America, & that "for some reason there was a strong alienation" between them, & that "it (the alienation) became so intense that they disclaimed relationship, & one of them placed the letter U instead of an O in his name, & they separated. "Dunham went north, & Donham went south."

Since we don't know the geographical location at which this quarrel took place, it is hard to know just where "north" & "south" would have been. Nor can we know how far in each direction each man went. Furthermore, T. J. Donham didn't know the given names of these brothers. He did assign a year to this event: 1760, or near that date.

Was this simply a guess? We've always questioned the 1760 date. After all, Dunhams were in America in plentiful number long before that date. But T.J.D. could be right, & possibly the disaffected brothers belonged to an entirely different line, one that could only be related back in Europe somewhere.

The Donham patriarch, the one who "went south," ended up in New Jersey, (to Page 3)

DUNHAMS & DONHAMS (from Page 2) & his descendants migrated further south than that: Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi.

Since we first read the 1913 genealogy, a bit more data has come in from Gladys Donham, Houston, TX., regarding this earliest-known Donham forebear. Gladys believes his name was Dennis, & he served in the American Militia in 1775. Of his children (8 in number & born between 1774 & 1790), T. J. D. gives the names: James, Jonathan, Dennis, Effie, Hannah, John, Phebe & Timothy. (Since the sons' & daughters' names here are interspersed, it might be that they were listed in order of birth.) The only line carried forward in T. J.D.'s book is that of Jonathan. This was a large family (648 entries in the index created by PSK), so there should be many more Donhams around today, if someone could shake that family tree.

Hindering further research in this matter is T.J.D.'d possibly socially commendable reticence about birth dates. Maybe his close relatives didn't want him giving their ages away. (Shame on them for subverting the whole project for vanity's sake! Maybe they didn't think genealogy MATTERED.) But the big question (the one we keep returning to, to mull over time & time again) concerns that fateful quarrel that sent 2 brothers on their separate ways across the country. When & where, & above all, WHY did it happen? Was it over religion? Or maybe nothing more substantial than a plate of bean? And how could the mists that it pulled over the facts be dispersed? Possibly a check of the Dunhams who participated in the Revolutionary War from someplace north of New Jersey would help. Look for a Dunham who is unknown in the annals of the descendants of Deacon John, & whose given name was NOT James, Jonathan, Dennis, John or Timothy. We can be certain that Mr. Donham # 1 would not have named a son after the brother he hated so much!

BELOW: Here's a souvenir of our July '98 visit from Harold Leeman (11)(John 1, 2 & 3, Elisha 4 & 5, Elijah 6, Solomon 7, Cordelia Dunham Pratt 8, Jessie May Pratt Julian 9, Edith May Julian Leeman 10), of Lansing, MI. Of course he was visiting at the home of Phyllis Kitson (12) (John 1, 2 & 3, Ebenezer 4 & 5, Jonathan 6, Ralph 7, Francis 8, Samuel E. 9, Miriam Dunham Ferriss 10, Lillyn Ferriss Barclay 11). The two are 7th cousins once removed. Thanks go to Harold for the photo.





Virginia Wood 1943



Hazel Wood 1945

SISTERS - In the October issue DD presented a photo of all the sons of Roy A. Wood (1889-1969)(9)(John 1, Samuel 2, Samuel 3, Ebenezer 4, Samuel 5, Lewis 6, Susannah Dunham Perry 7, Hannah Perry Wood 8). Now we have these photos (probably high school graduation pictures) of his 2 daughters. Virginia later became Mrs. A. E. Waltz, & Hazel Mrs. Salvatore Ciarcia. As before, the thanks go to Leon Wood, Findlay, OH.

On Page 5 DD continues with the serialization of the New York Dunham Vital Records compiled by William G. Burke, Watertown, NY.

Dunham Births

	year	name	date	location	County	Cer. No.
603	1899	Charles F.	10/27	Montour Falls	Schuyler	40322
604	1901	F	10/29	Montour Falls	Schuyler	41312
605	1903	M	11/18	Montour Falls	Schuyler	44832
606	1906	Kenneth H.	2/21	Montour Falls	Schuyler	7669
607	1908	Elisabeth	2/18	Montour Falls	Schuyler	7729
608	1884	M	5/17	Seneca Falls	Seneca	11491
609	1889	M	2/15	Seneca Falls	Seneca	6007
610	1889	Edgar H.	10/17	Seneca Falls	Seneca	34269
611	1890	M	12/11	Seneca Falls	Seneca	45145
612	1890	Mildred B.	3/15	Seneca Falls	Seneca	9848
613	1892	M	10/15	Seneca Falls	Seneca	41786
614	1892	Mabel	1/16	Seneca Falls	Seneca	2604
615	1897	M	1/28	Seneca Falls	Seneca	4357
616	1898	F	7/25	Seneca Falls	Seneca	29542
617	1899	Orsen W.	1/23	Seneca Falls	Seneca	3035
618	1903	Mary G.	6/13	Seneca Falls	Seneca	21868
619	1909	F	11/13	Seneca Falls	Seneca	53348
620	1913	M	5/24	Seneca Falls	Seneca	30280
621	1914	Mary E.	9/25	Seneca Falls	Seneca	75863
622	1915	Anna B.	8/24	Seneca Falls	Seneca	69534
623	1916	Robert	7/30	Seneca Falls	Seneca	61399
624	1918	Helen R.	10/8	Seneca Falls	Seneca	?
625	1891	F	3/19	Waterloo	Seneca	11095
626	1900	Norton	8/10	Canton	St Lawrence	30862
627	1921	John M.	10/28	Colton	St Lawrence	90028
628	1902	Frank A.	6/30	Hammond	St Lawrence	24989
629	1905	Helens	4/18	Hammond	St Lawrence	16527
630	1917	Thomas S.	5/23	Massena	St Lawrence	43239
631	1919	Jo R.	9/30	Massena	St Lawrence	70303
632	1919	Rhoda B.	10/14	Massena	St Lawrence	79341
633	1891	F	7/15	Avoca	Steuben	27647
634	1896	M	3/31	Avoca	Steuben	13736
635	1900	Thomas	6/6	Avoca	Steuben	50576
636	1886	F	9/24	Canisteo	Steuben	31412
637	1895	M	9/20	Canisteo	Steuben	40253
638	1910	M	2/1	Corning	Steuben	5521
639	1911	Margarette	8/17	Corning	Steuben	46168
640	1917	Ethel L.	4/10	Corning	Steuben	35055
641	1888	Walter S.	5/10	Dansville	Steuben	16591
642	1907	Be?iah	3/7	Hornell	Steuben	10073
643	1908	F	1/30	Hornell	Steuben	4577
644	1912	Edward O.	1/22	Hornell	Steuben	4142
645	1882	Nelson	8/19	Hornell (sv)	Steuben	10540

TO BE CONTINUED